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# Open Internet

An Open Internet means consumers can go where they want, when they want. This principle is often referred to as Net Neutrality. It means innovators can develop products and services without asking for permission. It means consumers will demand more and better broadband as they enjoy new lawful Internet services, applications and content, and broadband providers cannot block, throttle, or create special "fast lanes" for that content. The FCC's Open Internet rules protect and maintain open, uninhibited access to legal online content without broadband Internet access providers being allowed to block, impair, or establish fast/slow lanes to lawful content.

## The Rules

Adopted on February 26, 2015, the FCC's Open Internet rules are designed to protect free expression and innovation on the Internet and promote investment in the nation's broadband networks. The Open Internet rules are grounded in the strongest possible legal foundation by relying on multiple sources of authority, including: Title II of the Communications Act and Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. As part of this decision, the Commission also refrains (or "forbears") from enforcing provisions of Title II that are not relevant to modern broadband service. Together Title II and Section 706 support clear rules of the road, providing the certainty needed for innovators and investors, and the competitive choices and freedom demanded by consumers.

The Open Internet rules went into effect on June 12, 2015. They are ensuring consumers and businesses have access to a fast, fair, and open Internet.

The new rules apply to both fixed and mobile broadband service. This approach recognizes advances in technology and the growing significance of mobile broadband Internet access in recent years. These rules will protect consumers no matter how they access the Internet, whether on a desktop computer or a mobile device.

#### Bright Line Rules:

- No Blocking: broadband providers may not block access to legal content, applications, services, or non-harmful devices.
- No Throttling: broadband providers may not impair or degrade lawful Internet traffic on the basis of content, applications, services, or non-harmful devices.
- No Paid Prioritization: broadband providers may not favor some lawful Internet traffic over other lawful traffic in exchange for consideration of any kind—in other words, no "fast lanes." This rule also bans ISPs from prioritizing content and services of their affiliates.

To ensure an open Internet now and in the future, the Open Internet rules also establish a legal standard for other broadband provider practices to ensure that they do not unreasonably interfere with or disadvantage consumers' access to the Internet. The rules build upon existing, strong transparency requirements. They ensure that broadband providers maintain the ability to manage the technical and engineering aspects of their networks. The legal framework used to support these rules also positions the Commission for the first time to be able to address issues that may arise in the exchange of traffic between mass-market broadband providers and other networks and services. (Please note: this summary provides only a high-level overview of some

key aspects of the Open Internet Order. More thorough analysis is available in the Fact Sheet and in the Order itself.)

### Chairman Wheeler on the FCC's Open Internet Rules



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